

<https://ipb.ac.id/news/index/2021/06/prof-bambang-hero-saharjo-bahas-hubungan-kebakaran-hutan-dengan-pandemi-covid-19/097005e64023f9db3bee820aa5cfa32f#>



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## Prof. Bambang Hero Saharjo Explained the Relation between Forest Fire and COVID-19 Pandemic



According to information from Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG), most of Indonesia has entered the dry season. This indicates that some of these areas will be sensitive to the threat of forest and land fires, especially in peaty areas. Another threat that is still ongoing today is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit almost all regions in Indonesia.

Both of it shows strong indications of the opportunity for the synergy of the two dangerous threats, forest and land fires and also COVID-19 pandemic. These two lead to the emergence of double-burden or even multi-burden.

Dean of Faculty of Forestry and Environment, IPB University, Dr. Naresworo Nugroho said, “this can be a deadly duo that will threaten humans. The community needs to be given an understanding to not to using fire for land preparation, so it does not cause fire fog that can be harmful to human health”.

Professor from Faculty of Forestry and Environment IPB University, Prof. Bambang Hero Saharjo said that when talking about fire management and then being linked to COVID-19, it certainly requires large funds and of course in the right way.

“If it not in the right way, what will happen is only how to spend the funds, while the problem is not resolved”, he said.

“Well, this is where there is a need for synergy between government, researchers, universities and so on so that we can answer this problem”, he added.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Indonesian Lung Association, Dr. dr. Agus Dwi, SpP(K) revealed that every forest fire incident is always followed by an increase in COVID-19 cases. Usually the increase occurs after a week of forest fires.

“Air potential to support inflammation, exposure to Particular Matter (PM) to the lungs alters the immune response of lung cells and causes an increase in oxidative stress and inflammation. Particular matter is an invisible particle with a size of 2.5 micrometers”, he explained.

Ir R Basar Manullang, Direktur Pengendalian Kebakaran Hutan dan Lahan Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan (KLHK) juga menyampaikan bahwa “Sebanyak 99 persen Karhutla di Indonesia disebabkan oleh faktor manusia, yaitu kelalaian dan kesengajaan”. Ia menambahkan bahwa kebutuhan lahan mendorong terjadinya pembukaan lahan dengan membakar hutan. Dampak kebakaran hutan dan lahan di antaranya yaitu memusnahkan keanekaragaman hayati, meningkatkan emisi gas rumah kaca penyebab perubahan iklim, menurunkan kualitas dan produktivitas tanah, menimbulkan kerugian ekonomi, dan mengganggu kesehatan masyarakat. (SHM/Zul), Director of Land and Forest Fire Control at the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), Ir. R. Basar Manullang said that 99 percent of forest and land fires in Indonesia are caused by human factors, negligence and intentional. He added that the need for land encourages land clearing by burning forests. The impacts of forest and land fires include destroying biodiversity, increasing greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, reducing soil quality and productivity, causing economic losses, and disrupting public health. (SHM/Zul)

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